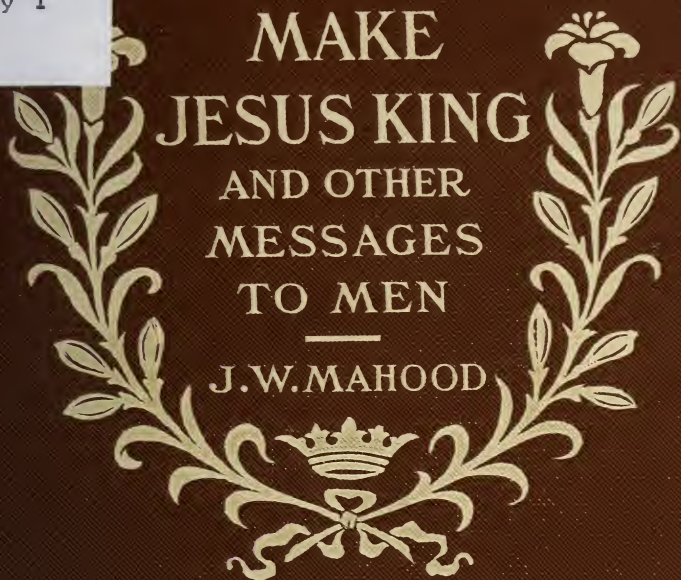


BV 4541

.M27

Copy 1

MAKE
JESUS KING
AND OTHER
MESSAGES
TO MEN
—
J.W. MAHOOD





Class _____

Book _____

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

Make Jesus King

AND OTHER

Messages to Men

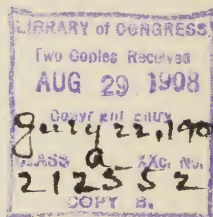
John W. Mahood
By
J. W. MAHOOD, D.D.

Author of The Art of Soul Winning, The Victory Life, Etc.



NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

BV 4541
M27



Copyright, 1908, by
EATON & MAINS.

TO
MY BROTHERS
THIS BOOK
IS
LOVINGLY DEDICATED

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Make Jesus King.....	1
Man Immortal.....	21
The Supreme Question.....	45
The Infallible Guidebook.....	65
Men's Excuses.....	83
Betraying Christ.....	97

FOREWORDS

Lord Beaconsfield once said, "The hope of England is in her young men." This may be said of our own country. The hope of America is in her young men. If we can have in this land of the free a generation of pure-hearted, high-souled, far-visioned, Christian young men, then we shall have a pure and noble citizenship.

And young men are coming to recognize that the Christian life is the only manly life. It appeals to the highest and noblest faculties of mind and heart. Mr. Gladstone declared that during nearly half a century of public life he had come in contact with sixty of the master minds of the world, and all were Christians but seven. And Lord Kelvin, the great scientist, said, "The

FOREWORDS

greatest discovery I ever made was when I discovered Jesus Christ as my Saviour.”

The Christian life is the normal life. No man can be at his best until the Spirit of God touches his heart and quickens his thought. There are heaven-born faculties and God-given powers that will forever lie dormant unless the heart's door be thrown open to Him who is the Light of the World. That some men may be helped to see the nobility and responsibility of the Christian life these messages are written.

MAKE JESUS KING

MAKE JESUS KING

“King of kings, and Lord of lords”

THERE is one triumph that is absolutely sure. The kingdom of Jesus Christ shall yet prevail. But the spirit of antichrist is now at work. Some men who once yielded allegiance to the Son of God are now betraying him—betraying him by neglect, by silence, by compromise, by denial of his divine personality and sovereignty. And he, whose blood right it is to reign in human hearts, is being dethroned and robbed of his regal authority. Shall we depose him too? Or shall we enthrone him who is “Lord of all”? Every man has the power to put Christ upon the throne of his life, or to keep that throne for another king.

WHO RULES?

Augustine, in his Confessions, tells an incident of his experience as a

MAKE JESUS KING

young lawyer. He was so fascinated with the study of Cicero's Orations that he became quite Ciceronian in his tastes and ambitions. One day he had a dream in which he thought himself seeking admission at the gate of heaven. The angel standing there said, "Who are you?" "Augustine of Milan," replied the young lawyer. "What are you?" said the angel. "A Christian," answered Augustine. "O, no," said the angel, "you are not a Christian; you are a Ciceronian." Whereupon the dreamer demanded an explanation. Said the angel: "They who are here are judged by what dominated their lives upon earth. In you, Augustine, not the Christ of the gospels, but the Cicero of Roman jurisprudence, was the dominating force. You cannot enter here." Augustine was so startled that he awakened and resolved that henceforth Christ, and not Cicero, should rule in his life.

MAKE JESUS KING

Every heart has its king. Every life is ruled by some scepter. Sometimes an evil passion is in control; sometimes an unholy appetite; sometimes a worldly ambition; sometimes a besetting sin. Who rules in your life? Is it some worldly sovereign, or is it the imperial Christ?

Now, the heart is the throne room of the life. That is why the wise man said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." There Christ wants to reign. Sin has reigned there, and by nature "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Only Christ can subdue and cleanse it. But the heart is the seat of the *intellect*, the *emotions*, and the *will*. Therefore his sovereignty should extend over all these.

THE INTELLECT

Make Jesus king in the intellectual life. We are living in a time of great intensity in this realm. And nowhere

MAKE JESUS KING

is the spirit of inquiry more intense than in matters theological. Modern investigation would apply the microscope to every stone in the foundations of revealed religion. And that is right, provided there is reverent approach and a true lens. But when we look from a wrong angle, or with dimmed vision, or with a nature developed only on one side, the intellect cannot be trusted. When men with no spiritual perception assume to be authoritative teachers in the highest spiritual things, when speculation runs riot in the temple of God, then the intellectual should be halted and reminded of its limitations. Let us have the very best that history and archæology can give us. Let them shed every ray of light that may be possible upon the Word of God. Let scholarship dedicate its keenest minds to the service of Christian philosophy. But this know: there is only one thing that will keep these uncertain natures of ours steady in the

MAKE JESUS KING

conflict of modern thought, and that is to put Jesus on the throne of the intellect.

EDUCATION NOT ENOUGH

The materialistic tendency of the age has perverted our educational ideals, and some are forgetting that great foundation truth, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Let this be forgotten and the inevitable trend of life is toward irreverence for sacred things, and then toward bacchanalian riot and hoodlumism. It cannot be denied that in many of our state institutions and secular colleges there is to-day a strong tide toward viciousness and immorality among students. Many parents, too, are so far forgetful of their responsibility for the spiritual life of their children as to send them to colleges where drunkenness and gambling and licentiousness are tolerated by the authorities, and where little or no attention is paid to

MAKE JESUS KING

morals, to say nothing about spiritual culture. The faculties of these institutions are sometimes filled with men who have no respect for the church of Christ, who "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," and who speak of the Bible as a worn-out book "to be read only by scholars as they read Chaucer or Spenser as an example of literary style." Is it any wonder, therefore, that there are so many college-bred young men who make shipwreck of life, and whose parents die with broken hearts? "Educate children without religion," said Lord Wellington, "and you make a race of clever devils." A missionary in Alaska has sent home this statement: "I know many college-bred men who are now saloon keepers, barkeepers, gamblers, hangers-on, and stokers for saloons. The worst savages I have ever known, the most filthy, hopeless, irreclaimable savages, were educated, college-bred men from Chris-

MAKE JESUS KING

tian communities.” Young men may have the very best that the colleges and universities can give in the way of intellectual training, and yet, if Jesus Christ is not given the supreme place in their lives, they may become infidels, apostates, or criminals.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

From New York city a wealthy man went down to Auburn prison to see his son, who was taken there that very day to begin a life sentence. That young man was a graduate of Columbia University, and, shortly after graduation, had committed a crime for which he was sentenced to prison. With the handcuffs on his wrists he was brought into the warden's private office. The heartbroken father threw his arms about his boy's neck and wept like a child. When the brief visit was almost over the father begged a lock of the boy's hair for his crippled mother, who was not able to come to the prison.

MAKE JESUS KING

The warden clipped off a little curl and handed it to the aged man. He stroked it tenderly in the palm of his hand, while the tears rained down his face, and said, "Is it possible that this is all I can command of my own boy? I would gladly give every dollar I am worth if I could forget the last five years and have him back again so that I could call him my own boy." When parents neglect the spiritual training of their children, and boys and young men are sent to schools where the social and moral influences lead away from Christ and the better life, they need not be surprised if they reap the whirlwind. It is only when Christ has the supreme place in the heart that the intellectual life will find its fullest and truest development, and the young men of our colleges be saved from moral ruin.

THE WILL

The will is imperial in human nature. It is therefore the starting point for a

MAKE JESUS KING

true Christian life. The "I will" must be spoken by every prodigal before he finds his way home. Indeed, as the *will* is, so is the *life*. If the will has been weakened or made stubborn by sin there is no surer indication of weakened character. No man is on safe ground until his will is conformed to the will of God. And it is only by our maintaining this attitude of will toward God that he can work in us "to will and to do of his good pleasure." George Macdonald makes one of his characters to say: "She was complaining of the providence with which God was dealing with her, and she said, 'I wish I had never been made.' And her friend said, 'My dear friend, you are not made yet, you are being made, and you are quarreling with God's processes.'" It is only when the will is submitted fully to God that he can bring the life to its full fruition.

There is no more reliable attest to a well-rounded Christian character than

MAKE JESUS KING

the complete submission of the will to God. Contrary to the popular notion, however, the submission of the will does not mean the giving up of the will, or the weakening of the will. Christ strengthens the will, makes the will free. Sin weakens and enslaves the will, and thus unfits a man to serve at his best in any honorable vocation. A vacillating will spells failure in professional life and in commercial life. Many a business man might easily trace his reverses to a gradual weakening of the will through neglect of duty, or through disobedience to God, thus inviting deadly assault by some besetting sin.

The only safe course, therefore, for the Christian man is to make Jesus king over the will. Let the will be kept by God and filled by God. Then will the life be safeguarded against the flood tide of temptation, and strengthened to resist every evil onslaught of heredity or environment.

MAKE JESUS KING

“THY WILL BE DONE”

There are some who seem to think that submission of the will to God means sorrow or suffering; but that is a mistake. It is preparation against an evil hour. To be sure, that hour will come. But even in the dark hour of sorrow the soul of him whose will is conformed to the will of God will be at peace. He will be able to say, “Thy will be done.” Standing beside the casket that held the remains of his wife, killed in a railway accident, Commander Booth-Tucker, of the Salvation Army, lifted up his voice and said: “My friends, God has taken away my darling wife and left me with these motherless children; but I want to say that God was never nearer to me than he is now, and Christ was never dearer to me than he is now.” There was complete submission in the hour of supreme sorrow. Make Jesus king over the will. Then shall the will be

MAKE JESUS KING

free and strong and restful; then shall bitterness be turned into blessed resignation; then shall the life be girdled with strength and beauty; and we shall "run and not be weary, and walk and not faint."

THE EMOTIONS

And if Christ reign over the intellect and over the will we must also give him supremacy over the emotions, for the emotions are most fundamental. Feeling lies at the very basis of consciousness, and so has its inevitable and intimate influence upon thought and will in every life. And while modern psychologists are agreed that intellect and feeling and will all unite in every conscious act of life, and that the unity of the mind is unmistakable, it must be admitted too that the emotions play a very important part on the stage of human action.

The emotions are much like electrical currents in that when they are turned into right channels they bring light and

MAKE JESUS KING

power and healing; but when unrestrained and unguided they become instruments of destruction and death.

Now, sin is the anarchist in the realm of the soul. Sin stirs up evil passions, and encourages self-indulgence and worldly ambition. Sin degrades, enslaves, and finally destroys the noblest qualities of manhood. But the presence of Christ liberates, ennobles, transforms, and glorifies. Sin leads the emotions into an unholy riot that results at last in deadened sensibility. The grace of Jesus Christ sanctifies and uplifts every heaven-born faculty, and marshals them all in mighty phalanx against every power of evil. Indeed, there are graces and faculties in these God-created natures of ours of which we shall never be conscious until Christ takes control.

In one of her poems Frances Ridley Havergal tells of receiving from a friend a beautiful harp as a present. In her eagerness to try her skill, how-

MAKE JESUS KING

ever, she glanced hastily over the note that accompanied it, and did not notice that it was an æolian harp. When she had tried to make music with it and had failed she put it down, disappointed. But when she read the note more carefully she discovered that it was not for her rough fingers to bring out its melodies. She lifted the window sash and placed it underneath, and soon as the breezes of heaven began fingering the delicate strings of the instrument the room was filled with beautiful strains of music. There are heaven-born emotions in these natures of ours that will forever lie dormant unless the Son of God shall touch them by his Spirit and wake them into joyous melody.

OVER THE WHOLE LIFE

Sometimes the purpose of life is divided and we give to God only a half-hearted service. But J. Hudson Taylor was right when he said, "If he is not

MAKE JESUS KING

Lord over all, he is not Lord at all." Dr. H. Grattan Guinness calls attention to the contrast between the two great African rivers. The Congo is seven miles wide at its mouth and discharges into the Atlantic Ocean one million tons of water every second—a majestic stream. But the Niger is deltaic and has forty different mouths. The life that is deltaic does not make much of an impression. It is the life with a single aim, with an overmastering purpose, that leaves its impress upon the world. When Christ is all in all, then the Christian life takes on true majesty.

John Ruskin says that there are some who would give Jesus the best rooms in their homes, and the best seats in the halls of commerce, if only they can keep a little place in the kitchen or the cellar, or a three-legged stool in the counting house, for the devil. But Jesus Christ will not be satisfied with any such arrangement.

MAKE JESUS KING

He must rule the whole house; he must reign over the whole empire of the life; he must be king over every part of the nature. There must be unconditional surrender to him. Therefore our prayer should be, "Unite my heart to fear thy name."

OVER OTHER LIVES

Having enthroned him in our own hearts, we must then seek to enthrone him in other lives. Many are living in rebellion against him. Many others are indifferent to his commands. This is treason of the most dangerous type. But he waits to forgive. Now that we have surrendered to him, at once he commissions us his ambassadors, and sends us to others with his message of mercy. Every unsaved man is a rebel fortress which we must claim for the King. See what Savonarola did in Florence. He claimed the city for Christ. He thundered against sin. He rebuked iniquity in high places. He

MAKE JESUS KING

preached Christ crucified. In the name of Christ he defied the wicked Medicean despot. He transformed Florence, and literally enthroned Jesus, inscribing over the doors of the Palazzo Vecchio, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." And what Savonarola did in Florence we may do in human hearts all about us. By our consistent living, by our fidelity to the right, by our interest in every good work, by faithful witnessing for Christ we may

MAKE JESUS KING

MAN IMMORTAL

MAN IMMORTAL

"If a man die, shall he live again?"

THE universe throbs with life. There are no dead worlds. In all the vast expanse of space there is not a star that has not felt the touch of the great Creator's hand, nor one that does not pursue its changeless path at his word.

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine."

In the higher realm of being I see now only human beings. But could the shutters of mortality be thrown back from these windows of the soul I might see the ministering spirits of God; and could the earthy wadding be removed from these ears I might hear the music of the skies.

And yet, if there is any problem of the ages, surely this is it, "If a man die, shall he live again?" My life is

MAN IMMORTAL

limited and imprisoned. I struggle on a few brief years in the dark, and then I go down to the grave. Do I? Or do I go outward and upward? Does my sphere of vision enlarge? And having fled this earthly house, do I come into a better habitation—"a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"? This is the question that puzzled Job, and doubtless will continue to puzzle human thought until that day when death shall be driven into eternal exile.

REVERENT APPROACH

It is not the purpose of this message to venture upon any metaphysical or abstract discussion concerning the immortality of the soul; but rather to call attention to some of the plain, practical, authoritative evidences of a life beyond, and emphasize the wisdom of making preparation for such a life.

And we should be reverent here. For, after all, science knows nothing

MAN IMMORTAL

more about the origin of life than about its perpetuity. Biological chemistry has assured us again and again that the secret of the origin of life was just about to be discovered. But everybody knows that the spontaneous generation and other abiogenesis theories have come to naught; and the speculation once advanced by a great scientist that the germs of life were transmitted from other worlds to this through space is now laughed at as a wild hypothesis. Science cannot offer a single reasonable explanation of the origin of life, neither can it produce a scintilla of evidence that the soul is not immortal. John Stuart Mill, that keen-eyed skeptic, admitted this. To be sure, in later years science has done much to lay bare the secrets of nature, but with all its triumphs it is yet very fallible. Indeed, it is doubtful whether science, even in this modern day, can furnish us with any knowledge concerning the material world which is absolutely free

from all possibility of doubt. Invariably it must fall back on certain fundamental hypotheses.

TWO MISLEADING ASSERTIONS

It might be well in the first place to call attention to two blatant assertions often made by thoughtless persons, and sometimes used to beguile the unwary:

1. *That it makes no difference what a man believes.* A man takes a dose of strychnine thinking it to be quinine. Does it make no difference? Another man eats toadstools believing them to be mushrooms. Does it make no difference? Such a theory puts truth and falsehood on a level. Because a criminal believes he has a right to commit a crime is no reason why the law should excuse him. "Unsound thinking is the basis of unsound acting," says one. The doctrine that it makes no difference what a man believes was born in hell.

2. *That every belief must answer at the bar of reason.* "All things must be

demonstrated," they say, or, "We can believe only what we can see and reason out for ourselves." But this is a very dangerous platform for any intelligent man to stand on. An old Quaker met a young man in whom he was interested, and who had just returned from college. "How is thee getting along spiritually?" said the old man. "O, I've given up all that nonsense," said the young fellow. "I do not believe anything that I have not seen for myself or that others have not seen." "Young man," said the Quaker, "has thee ever seen thy brains?" "No." "Does thee believe thee has any?"

The man who tries to carry this theory into his everyday life will have a serious time, for there are a hundred mysteries in his physical life just as profound as the mysteries of religion. No man can truthfully say that all his beliefs answer at the bar of reason, and reason is not the highest court in a man's nature, by any means. What

MAN IMMORTAL

would be thought of a man who would say, "Everything must be proven by the naked eye." Then telescopes and microscopes would be no longer necessary. But just as well say that as to say that everything must be known by reason. Faith is reason's telescope. The naked eye goes so far; faith goes infinitely farther. Faith makes real what reason cannot make real. Faith rests not on the evidence of sense, but upon the evidence of the soul. "Faith," says the apostle, "is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."

THE SUPREME AUTHORITY

The inspired Word of God is the supreme authority concerning the soul's immortality, for it is the revelation of the Creator of all things. What does the Bible say about the life beyond?

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psa. 73. 24).

"And these shall go away into eternal

MAN IMMORTAL

punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25. 46).

"Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5. 28, 29).

"But hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10).

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15. 53).

"For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5. 4).

"He shall receive . . . in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10. 30).

MAN IMMORTAL

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life” (John 3. 14, 15).

“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6. 54).

“And I give unto them eternal life” (John 10. 28).

“The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6. 23).

“And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5. 11).

THREE GREAT FACTS

Now, there are three great facts that shed light upon these scriptures. They are mentioned because they should appeal strongly to thoughtful men:

1. *The conscious individuality of the spirit apart from the body.* This body is not I. I am no more dependent upon

MAN IMMORTAL

this body for existence than Ole Bull or Paganini was dependent upon one violin. This body is the instrument of the immortal spirit. Every thoughtful man admits that consciousness is not a function of matter. Every man feels within a power totally distinct from his body. He fears, he sorrows, he rejoices, he despairs. And notwithstanding the constant change of the component properties of the body, conscious identity abides from youth to age. You have not the same body you had ten years ago, yet you are the same man. You have preserved your own permanent personality. Even the whole brain has changed, but memory abides.

We are spirits clad in veils;
Man by man was never seen:
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen.

2. *The state of the mind in dying.*
When the body is in the last stages of weakness and decay the mind is

MAN IMMORTAL

often left in full possession of its undiminished spiritual force. Men like Gladstone, Milton, Angelo, Humboldt, Beethoven, and Hugo all retained their mental vigor in old age. These men all felt that they had only done a small part of what they wanted to do. The body began to fall into decay, but the mental power remained. And often in the throes of physical dissolution the soul has been known to assert its independent spiritual being, and declare that there is no death.

There seems to be an impression abroad to-day that psychological science precludes the separate existence of the spirit, but that distinguished psychologist, Professor James, declares that there is no scientific reason for denying the independent reality of the spirit, neither is there any scientific reason for denying the possibility of continued existence after separation from the body. In Mammoth Cave, as we glided down the river Styx in a

boat, the walls of the cavern came down so close that we had to crouch down to keep from striking our heads on the roof of rock. Presently we left the boat. The river disappeared under the rock. Up to the moment of disappearance the river ran swiftly. Now, nobody was foolish enough to say that after the river disappeared there was no river. And if in the moment of dying we find reason and conscience and love and imagination still strong, will anyone say that life does not go on?

3. *The belief of the race in a future state.* In every human heart may be found that longing for immortality which must have its answer in the plan of the eternal God. People of all ages, in various stages of civilization, have believed in a future state. Egyptians, Persians, Babylonians, Gauls, and Mohammedans all have their heaven. The Arabs tie a camel at the grave, and the Greenlanders bury a

dog with their dead, thinking that the dog will find the way to the happy hunting grounds. Some men of science insist that the human race is more than a hundred thousand years old, but if it is there seems to be ample evidence that the prehistoric tribes of earth believed in immortality. They buried trinkets and utensils in the graves of their dead for their use in another world. Through the long ages of the past the human race has ever held to the belief that the soul is immortal. Some exceptions there have been, to be sure, but they have been such as pre-eminently prove the rule—a few philosophers, so called, who have “reasoned themselves out of all hope of immortality,” and a few of the lower tribes of Kaffirs and Hottentots. And this universal instinct is to thoughtful men a strong argument in favor of immortality.

THREE OTHER GREAT FACTS

Then there are three other great facts that are undeniable, and challenge the attention of the thoughtful:

1. *Doubt debases, while faith in the future life enlarges and glorifies manhood.* Nineteen twentieths of the world's intellectual giants have believed in the immortality of the soul, and have worshiped God. The American Association of Science represents the highest culture and education. At a recent annual meeting seventy-two per cent of the members present were found to be active Christians. A few years ago the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in Montreal, and it was found that three fourths of those present were professing Christians, and a daily prayer meeting was held in connection with their sessions. Nearly all the great leaders of the world's thought have held to the immortality of the soul. To be sure, we

have had some men of intellect and talent who were doubters. But what did doubt do for them? In the realm of English literature, for instance, we have had three poets who are known as unbelievers. But Shelley and Byron were anarchists in morals, and rebels against much that we count dearest and best in life. Unbridled passion chained them to the earth. Matthew Arnold was a gloomy pessimist whose life seemed one long wail of despair. By nature these men were gifted, but when they put God out of their lives the higher, nobler attributes of manhood shriveled and died.

In the realm of science look at Darwin. What did doubt do for him? Hear his own confession: "My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts." He makes the frank statement that he had lost the sense of beauty, art, and music, and also the sense of the spirit-

ual and infinite through lifelong devotion to material facts. In consequence his higher nature died of atrophy. And so gradual was the loss of soul sense that he had no struggle over its decline. He allowed himself to be so engrossed in material things that the spiritual part of his nature withered away. We see the same thing in many men to-day. They allow their time and attention to be so taken up with the facts pertaining to their business or profession that the spiritual nature dies of neglect. Lawyers spend all their time on books of law; physicians spend all their time on books of medicine; teachers spend all their time on text-books. Then they wake up some day to wonder why they have no spiritual appreciation. But why should they wonder? God's Word has been neglected; prayer has been neglected; the spiritual nature has been starved. Then doubt finds easy entrance.

In the Alleghanies a hunter shot a

MAN IMMORTAL

large bald eagle. He found that the eagle's claws were held firmly in a steel trap. The trap and chain bore marks of vicious blows from the eagle's bill; and while he had been able to fly he had been so hindered and wearied by the heavy trap that he came within reach of the hunter's rifle. It is so with many a man. He has the brain power and heart power fit for high altitudes of thought and usefulness, but doubt is the weight that holds him down.

Doubt has the same effect on nations as on individuals. When the people of any nation give up their hope and longing for immortality they become beastly in their lives. Look at France before the Revolution. Men said, "There is no God, and death is an eternal sleep." Then France became a hell upon earth. The streets of Paris ran red with blood. In alarm the leaders called a convention and sent out this declaration: "The French na-

tion believes in God and in a future state." Social and national degeneration has always followed in the footsteps of doubt.

2. *In the supreme hour of a man's life doubt always fails.* Heine, the great German physician and philosopher, after many years of widely proclaimed unbelief, said: "The divine homesickness came upon me. I rushed to my room; closed the door; fell upon my knees, and prayed for strength and courage and joy. I am now happy with my God. Prayer hath done this." Professor Mhegard, of the University of Copenhagen, said: "Full of faith in the sufficiency of science, I thought to have found it a refuge from all the contingencies of life. This illusion is vanished. When the tempest came which plunged me in sorrow, the moorings of the cable of science broke like a thread. Then I seized upon the help that many before me had laid hold of. I sought and found peace in God.

Since then I have certainly not abandoned science, but I have assigned it to another place in my life." Contrast the dying utterances of such blasphemers as Voltaire and Paine with those of the men who have found Christ and died in the triumphs of the Christian faith, and see how doubt utterly fails in the death hour, while faith in the future life brings comfort and help. The hour of death is the hour of darkness for the skeptic, but the hour of victory for the true Christian.

3. *The resurrection of Christ.* Fifteen hundred years after Job asked this question, "If a man die shall he live again," there came to earth One who was the Son of God. His coming had been foretold for thousands of years. He came with the cross upon his shoulder and the thorns upon his brow. He said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He was crucified and buried. The third day he rose again. There is no fact of ancient his-

MAN, IMMORTAL

tory that rests upon more substantial evidence than the fact that Christ rose from the dead. Through fifteen hundred years men have tried to disprove it, but all their efforts have been in vain. This great truth grows brighter with the passing years, and is an undeniable evidence of the immortality of man. For He who is risen has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." And, indeed, "only through the resurrection of Christ from the dead could God demonstrate his possession of, and his ability to bestow, immortality."

THE DIVINE GUIDE

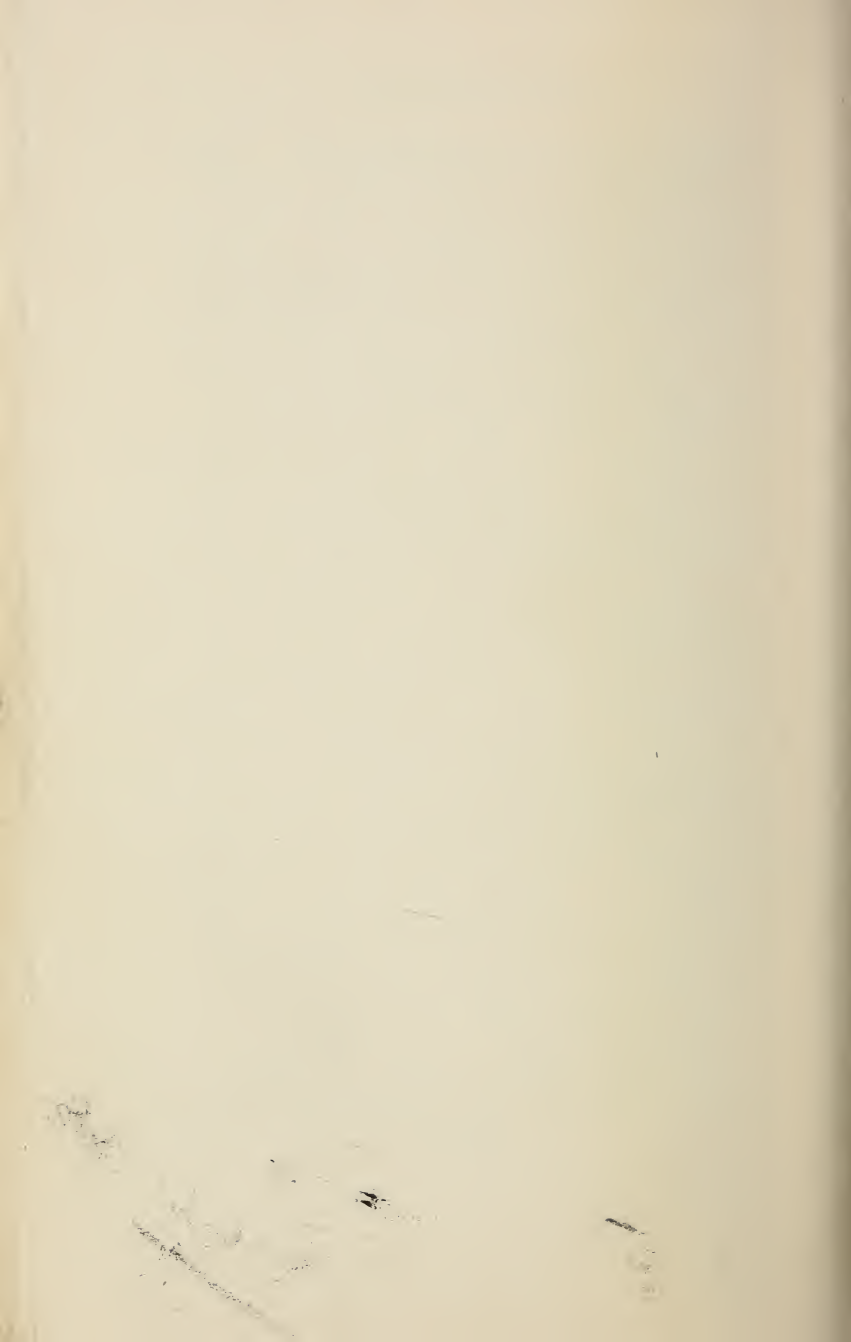
Standing then as we do upon the threshold of another world, it is surely the part of wisdom to make preparation for that life beyond. If you were going to Palestine or Australia tomorrow you would surely want to look up routes and make ready for the journey. That man is a fool who does

MAN IMMORTAL

not. The Bible points out the only safe way into eternity. Christ must be our Guide. To go without him is to lose the way and stumble into eternal darkness. Some years ago a party of young people determined to climb Mount Washington alone. The proprietor of the hotel urged them to take a guide, saying he would give them one for half price. But they refused. Then he said, "It is dangerous; I will give you a guide free." "O, no," they said, "we are going to do something to astonish our friends." "But what if you get caught in a snowstorm?" said the landlord. "O, that will be lovely!" said the young ladies; "we will snowball each other." They started with light hearts. They had gone a few miles when they saw a white cloud above them. Soon they were in the snowstorm. "Isn't this fun?" they said. But soon the snow covered the path. They said, "O, I wish we had a guide now." They

MAN IMMORTAL

struggled on, but were soon lost. Two ladies sank down unable to go further. They waited for daylight and a rescue party, but, when they were found, one young lady was frozen to death. No man can find the way to life and heaven without Christ the Divine Guide.



THE SUPREME QUESTION

THE SUPREME QUESTION

“What think ye of Christ?”

THIS must become a personal question to every man who has heard the gospel message. When the testimony of the witnesses has been given, then every man must answer for himself. And everything depends upon the answer both for time and for eternity. “What think ye of Christ?” is the supreme question of human life, for “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”; and “he that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

WHO WAS CHRIST?

Men have much to say about what Christ said, and about what Christ did. That is important. But let us

THE SUPREME QUESTION

seek now an answer to this crowning question of all: Who was Christ? This is the starting point of all Christian theology. Christianity rests upon the person of Christ.

The reverent astronomer, looking up into the heavens, and studying the glory of the infinite spaces, sees the wonderful evidence of design and law and power manifest through all the galaxy of worlds, and stands amazed and speechless. Human thought staggers at even a glimpse of God's creation. And it is so with some who come and stand in the presence of the Christ of Calvary, and think to account for him from a human standpoint.

EVOLUTION CANNOT ANSWER

The evolutionist comes into the presence of Christ and is speechless. A few years ago the hypothesis of evolution was supposed to account for everything that was. But now men are beginning to see that it is but a

THE SUPREME QUESTION

philosophy of method that has its bounds—a theory that cannot be proven. “Regarded as a theory to account for life, evolution is the wildest folly,” said Sir Robert Anderson. It does account for some things, but not for all. It may trace some stages in the life of the brute creation, and some utilitarian adaptations in nature, but it has yet to account for the fragrance of the rose, or for the mystery of music. It cannot bridge the abyss between death and life, much less can it explain “the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.”

PHILOSOPHY CANNOT ANSWER

The philosopher, too, stands speechless in the presence of Jesus Christ. At last men are learning that while we may study physical facts from a philosophical standpoint we cannot so understand all spiritual truth. To look into the heights and depths of great spiritual truths we must have other

THE SUPREME QUESTION

eyes than those of reason. Heart and conscience and will must have vision. "The natural man," says the apostle, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And of no great spiritual fact is this more true than of that which pertains to the Godhead of Christ.

UNITARIANISM CANNOT ANSWER

The Unitarian is speechless in the presence of this wonder-working Christ. The great Dr. Channing said: "The character of Jesus is wholly inexplicable on human principles." Unitarianism has no place in the Christian economy. It is not a *Christian* church. When Peter made that memorable confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus at once said, "Upon this rock"—this confession, this truth—"will I build my church." No organization has any right to call it-

THE SUPREME QUESTION

self a *Christian church* that does not accept that confession. Nor has any man a right to the name of Christian who has not through the shed blood of the Lamb of God come into blessed fellowship with the Father.

Of course, something depends upon the spirit with which a man approaches Christ. If he comes as a critic, or as a wise man, or as a self-willed Pharisee, it may be in place for him to speak of Christ as simply a good man and a prophet. If he comes saying, "I thank thee that I am not as other men; look at my honesty, my popularity, my righteousness," he will remain a stranger to the Friend of sinners. But if he comes with sin-sick heart and sin-burdened soul, and, finding deliverance, begins to know the sweetness of pardon and the joy of service, then he will be ready to say:

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

THE SUPREME QUESTION

With this greatest of questions pressing for an answer let us come now to look at Christ from the standpoint of the four men who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit wrote the story of his life. By doing this we shall get the view the Holy Spirit intended—a view of the full-orbed life, and of the supreme and transcendent character of the Divine Man.

SAINT MATTHEW'S ANSWER

“What think ye of Christ?” looking at him from the standpoint of *prophecy*? That was Matthew's viewpoint. According to this gospel he was the hope of the ages, the promised Messiah, the desire of all nations. He was “the son of David, the son of Abraham”; and while of royal lineage, yet he was born of the Holy Spirit's power, and so must be the Divine One—“God with us.” Matthew sees Jesus in the Old Testament; and we must see him there if we would get the true vision of his

THE SUPREME QUESTION

glory. There are more than three hundred detailed predictions of the Christ in the Old Testament; and all this prophecy is so different from all other kinds of prediction as to make it unmistakably divine. Dr. A. T. Pierson says: "Philosophical historians or statesmen may forecast national convulsions or social revolutions by studying the annals of the past and watching the development of current events, but the predictions of the whole Bible are almost wholly outside the range of probability or precedent."

It would be helpful to the man who wishes to see Christ from the standpoint of prophecy to study the various classes of Old Testament prophecy, and see how they emphasize in their fulfillment the evidential value of the prophecies regarding the Messiah. There are the prophecies concerning the Jews, the Babylonian captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem. Or, there are

THE SUPREME QUESTION

the prophecies concerning other nations than the Jews, such as the Amalekites, the Egyptians, the Assyrians; or the prophecies regarding the great cities, such as Jerusalem, Tyre, Babylon, Nineveh. But the thoughtful student will soon discover that the Old Testament has one theme, and that is redemption; one subject, and that is the promised Redeemer. A great German Hebrew scholar likens the Old Testament Messianic prophecies to three concentric circles. "The Mediator of salvation is made known (1) as the seed of the woman, who is the conqueror of evil in mankind; (2) as the seed of the patriarchs, who is the blessing of the nations; (3) as the seed of David, who is the salvation and glory of Israel." Jesus Christ is the perfect consummation of all these Messianic prophecies. Without him they are absolutely inexplicable. Without "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" the Old Testament is a mean-

THE SUPREME QUESTION

ingless jumble, but with him it is "order and music and light."

Dr. Moorehead, of Xenia Theological School, returning from a long journey, brought a dissected map as a present for his children. He told them that when they had put it together they would have a good knowledge of the geography of North and South America. The girls worked faithfully for a time. Then one of them became discouraged. She walked away saying, "I cannot put it together." Suddenly the older girl discovered a man's hand on the reverse side of one of the blocks. She turned over the others quickly, and, calling to her sister, she said, "Come back! There's a man on the other side." Their nimble fingers soon put the man together, and, turning the completed figure over, they found every lake and river and mountain range in its place. So when we, like Matthew, find the Divine Man in the Old Testament, everything else will

THE SUPREME QUESTION

have its place. Then these ancient books will no longer seem a jumble of history and prophecy and exhortation, but will be a completed picture, exhibiting God's perfect plan through the ages.

SAINT MARK'S ANSWER

"What think ye of Christ?" looking at him from the standpoint of *what he did?* That was Saint Mark's viewpoint. If Saint Matthew's is the gospel of prophecy, Saint Mark's is the gospel of service. One half of this gospel is devoted to the miraculous works of Jesus. Nowhere else in the gospels is the majesty of Christ's life of service set forth so beautifully. In the very first chapter we find Jesus casting out evil spirits, healing Simon's wife's mother, and healing the leper. And this first chapter is a picture of the whole book. Indeed, here we are not only in the presence of miracles, but in the presence of "the Miracle of the Ages."

THE SUPREME QUESTION

But is he not just the same to-day? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." What he did by the Sea of Galilee and in the streets of Jerusalem he is doing in our own day. Let the millions out of whom have been cast the demons of appetite and passion and worldliness and blasphemy witness. Let the Christian institutions that have risen everywhere—hospitals for the sick, refuges for the oppressed, homes for the poor and aged, orphanages for little children, asylums for the unfortunate—let them all witness to the power of the Son of God. The witness of Saint Mark is the witness of the centuries.

SAINT LUKE'S ANSWER

"What think ye of Christ?" looking at him from the standpoint of *what he was?* So Saint Luke looked at him. His gospel is a revelation of the character of Christ. He brings forward many witnesses who give their testi-

THE SUPREME QUESTION

mony. We have the testimony of the angel who made the startling announcement to the shepherds, "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." There is the testimony of the heavenly choir who sang, "Glory to God in the highest!" The aged Simeon gives his testimony,

A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel.

Then comes the witness of the Baptist; and also the witness of the demon who cries, "Thou art the Son of God." God the Father bears witness to his Only Begotten: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." And Christ himself takes the witness stand, and, in the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath day, reads from the prophet Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to
the poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

THE SUPREME QUESTION

And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Then closing the book he declares, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Now, all this testimony may be found in the first four chapters. But a careful study of this wonderful gospel will disclose the fact that in almost every chapter Saint Luke brings forward some witnesses to the majesty of the character of Christ. Even his enemies give testimony to his innocence. The Jews, Pilate, Judas, are found on Luke's witness stand. Here are witnesses to his holiness, his humility, his forgiving power. What thoughtful man can read the gospel by Saint Luke and not be convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the Divine Man?

SAINT JOHN'S ANSWER

"What think ye of Christ?" looking at him from the standpoint of *his lordship of life?* This was Saint John's

THE SUPREME QUESTION

viewpoint. So, too, Paul looked at him. And "what's good enough for Paul," said Dr. Patton, of Princeton, "is good enough for me." The witness of Saint John is specially worthy of attention and study, for ninety-two per cent of the matter of this gospel is peculiar to Saint John, or given by him alone. According to John, Christ is the *Logos*. That was Plato's word, but to the old Greek philosopher the *logos* was "the reason, the shaping reality of all things." John gives it a Christian baptism: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." Indeed, as someone has suggested, it

THE SUPREME QUESTION

may be truthfully said that Greek philosophy, as well as Old Testament prophecy, had its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. All the problems that puzzled the old philosophers concerning life and immortality have their answer in Christ.

Saint John's gospel is essentially the gospel of *life*. Forty-four times is that word *life* used here. "These things are written," says John, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye may have life in his name." In this gospel we have the sermon on the new birth; the sermon at the grave of Lazarus; the raising of Lazarus; and the resurrection scene painted with such startling vividness. Indeed, every chapter of this blessed evangel emphasizes in some way the Lordship of Christ.

YOUR ANSWER

What think you of Christ? You have heard the voice of prophecy that

THE SUPREME QUESTION

through long centuries foretold with unmistakable clearness his coming, his life, and his work. You see what he did. He "built no temples, wrote no books, colonized no lands, yet he turned the world upside down," and left his signature so deeply written upon the world's pages that all civilization measures time from his birth. You see his lordship of life. He "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." He conquered death, and the grave could not hold him. What do *you* think of Christ? You are answering this question now—answering it by the way you treat him. He said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." You are either shaming Christ or glorifying him every day you live. You shame or glorify him in your business life, in your social

THE SUPREME QUESTION

life, in your home life; and your everyday treatment of Him who made the worlds and redeemed you with his blood is your answer to this supreme question.

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

THERE is one guidebook that has no defects. Its information is absolutely reliable. And inasmuch as it is the guidebook for the journey from the cradle to the grave it is well that it makes no mistakes. For what more important travel than this? Life's ocean is beset with innumerable reefs and shoals, and should our chart be mistaken the voyage might end in eternal disaster. This guidebook is the Bible. For many centuries life's travelers have trusted its information, and not one who has followed its directions has lost his way or met with mishap.

TESTIMONY

Hear the testimony of the good and great concerning this guidebook: John Henry Newman said, “Its light is like the body of heaven in its clearness;

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

its vastness like the bosom of the sea; its variety like scenes of nature." Michael Faraday, a prince among scientists, said, "Why will people go astray when they have this blessed Book to guide them?" And was it not John Milton who said, "There are no songs to be compared to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics equal to those the Scriptures can teach us"? George Herbert wrote:

The Bible? That's the Book. The Book indeed,
The Book of Books,
On which who looks
As he should do, aright, shall never need
Wish for a better light
To guide him in the night.

Sir Isaac Newton gave this testimony: "We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy"; and Lord Macaulay said, "The English Bible is a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power." Sir

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

Walter Scott, who when dying asked for "the Book," wrote:

Within this awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries:
Happiest he of human race
To whom God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, and learn the way;
And better had he ne'er been born
Who reads to doubt, or reads to scorn.

Hall Caine bears witness to the Bible thus: "I think I know my Bible as few literary men know it. There is no book in the world like it, and the finest novels ever written fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells. Whatever strong situations I have in my books are not of my creation, but are taken from the Bible." General U. S. Grant said: "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor to your liberties. Write its precepts in your hearts and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the fu-

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

ture.” And this is the testimony of John Wesley: “I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit coming from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing—the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a book. O, give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here, then, I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end—to find the way to heaven.”

AN INSPIRED BOOK

The Bible is an inspired book. “Holy men of old spake as they were moved

by the Holy Spirit." God is the author of all its messages. This is the only satisfactory way to account for the Bible. An eminent Bible scholar puts the argument like this: "The Bible must have been produced by good men or angels, by bad men or devils, or by God himself. Good men or angels could not have produced it, for they would not impose on men a fraud by claiming that it is a divine revelation; bad men or devils could not produce such a book, for it is obviously above their level in its moral and spiritual teachings; and hence the only alternative is to accept it as ultimately of divine origin and authority."

Much attention has been given recently to examination of ancient manuscripts of the Bible, and to inquiries concerning their genuineness; and while the external evidences are ample to convince all reasonable men that the Bible is what it claims to be—the very Word of God—yet the evidences that

in these days appeal most strongly to thoughtful men are the inner and spiritual. To have allowed our faith to rest on the mere external letter would have meant bondage. There is a nobler way—a more Godlike way. It is that we shall verify, each for himself, the authority and inspiration of the divine message by the personal experimental method. This is the bulwark of Christian evidence that is absolutely impregnable. When it is daylight all about us what better evidence do we need that the sun is up? And when there breaks in upon the soul from the pages of the Scriptures the light of God what more convincing evidence do we need that God is speaking to us through his Word?

Someone said, "It is not what we make of the Bible, but what the Bible makes of us, that matters." The inspiration of the Bible is self-evidencing. There is an inherent something which gives majesty and authority to every

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

message it contains, and appeals to the inner consciousness in a way which gives assurance of its divinity.

Thy Word is everlasting truth;
How pure is every page!
That holy book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age.

When once it enters to the mind,
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instruction find,
And raise their thoughts to God.

A HEART BOOK

The Bible is a heart book. To read it for the sake of its literary setting, or for the sake of its interesting historical information, or to have a knowledge of its general plan and character, is to miss the best of it. True, it has its appeal to the intellect, and there is no book that contains more stimulating thought for the human mind. But of all books it is *the heart book*. A little blind girl had received from a friend the gift of a New Testament with raised letters. And as she read it a new joy and hope

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

came into her life such as she had never known. No wonder she prized the book above everything else she possessed. But there came a time when her fingers lost their acuteness of touch and she could no longer spell out the raised letters. She was almost heartbroken, but resolved to send the book that had been such a blessing to her to a little blind friend who could read it. She raised the open page to kiss it good-by when it dawned upon her that she could recognize the words with her lips. It was a joyous revelation. She would keep the book she loved so dearly and read it with her lips. And if we would know the wealth of wisdom and inspiration that God's Book contains we must bring it up close to the heart. We must read it with an open, loving heart.

And herein is a very important difference between the Bible and the so-called sacred books of the heathen world. Professor Max Mueller, who

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

edited about fifty of these ancient books of heathen religions, says: "It is a problem to me how these sacred books of the East should contain so much that is not only unmeaning, artificial, and silly, but even hideous and repellent." Of the Brahmanas he says: "These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots and the ravings of madmen, and we shall feel astonished that human language and human thought should ever be used for such purposes." But the Bible appeals always to the highest and best in man, and on every page bears the imprint of the finger of God.

The best expositor of this heart book is the Holy Spirit. "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." Those who have visited the great Mammoth Cave in Kentucky will remember that great hall where stalagmite and

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

stalactite like mighty pillars support the great dark dome. But there is always a sense of disappointment until the guide lights a piece of magnesium ribbon and throws it upward. Then the real glory of that magnificent subterranean palace appears. The pillars seem to be set with precious stones and the dome is ablaze with light. And they who seek to explore the pages of the Bible with "the dim torch of reason" will never see its real beauty. Not until the Holy Spirit sheds light upon the sacred page will its glory appear.

AN IMMORTAL BOOK

"The truth of the Lord endureth forever," said the psalmist. For eighteen hundred years it has been attacked, doubted, denied, and reviled; for eighteen hundred years some of the mightiest of the world's intellectual giants have been looking for flaws in its foundations. But scientists and philosophers, as well as vulgar assailants,

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

have had to acknowledge that it is invulnerable. Other books crumble under the tread of the centuries, but this Book belongs not to time, but to eternity. Its foundations are sure. Said an old Buddhist priest of China to a Christian missionary: "And you are here with your Book! I was yonder in the sacred island of the sea and I found you there with your Book. I was yonder on the far western border and I found you there with your Book. And now you are here in the very center of the empire. And the more I think about it the more I am persuaded that we are going and you are coming." He was right. This message from heaven shall yet be heard in every darkened corner of earth, and all men shall know that God hath spoken. There are two crowning lessons to this meditation:

MASTERY OF THE WORD

If the Bible is what it claims to be, and what we believe it to be—the very

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

Word of God—should we not give more attention to its study than to any other book? “Ye shall know the truth,” said Jesus, “and the truth shall make you free.” But so many do not know God’s Word. Every man may know the Bible if he will. Perhaps the most practical method of Bible study is that known as the “synthetic method.” Dr. James M. Gray, in that excellent little book, *How to Master the English Bible*, has done much to encourage this plan of Bible study. He gives six simple rules: 1. Begin at the beginning. 2. Read the book. 3. Read it continuously. 4. Read it repeatedly. 5. Read it independently. 6. Read it prayerfully. This plan faithfully followed from Genesis to Revelation will result in a consciousness of mastery of the Word such as can never be secured by the fragmentary study with which so many people seem to be contented.

In these latter days we have heard

much about the baneful influences of destructive criticism, but is it not just as wicked to neglect God's Word as to mutilate it? There is a story told of a young man who on leaving home for the theological school was given some good advice by his father. "Now, John," said the old man, "don't let them take away your father's Bible from you. Beware of higher critics." When John returned his father questioned him, and, to his great joy, found that his son was all right. Then John went abroad for two years of study. When he reached home again his father said, "John, I hope you have not allowed them to weaken your faith in the old Bible. What about Elisha's ax? Did it swim? And did the fish swallow Jonah?" "O, now, father," said John, quietly, "you do not mean to say that you still believe that story about Jonah?" The old man threw up his hands, horror-stricken. "O, John, you have forsaken your father's Bible.

You have lost your faith!" "Father, be reasonable," said John. "What about Jonah? Who was he? Is he still in your Bible?" "Why, yes," said the old man, trembling with emotion. "Have you read about him lately, father? Get your Bible and show me where you find anything about Jonah." With considerable indignation the old man took down his Bible and began to turn over the leaves excitedly, but could not find Jonah. "Now, father," said John, "I may be wicked, but when I was home two years ago I took your Bible and cut out carefully the pages of Jonah, and you have never missed it." The father's face revealed a peculiar mental struggle for a few moments. Then he said, "I see it, my boy. I am as bad as the higher critics. There has been no Jonah in my Bible for two years." *Is not a neglected Bible as bad as a mutilated Bible?*

THE INFALLIBLE GUIDEBOOK

OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD

The second crowning lesson is obedience to the Word. "God hath spoken," and when God speaks men should listen and obey. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7. 21). In his Word, God has made known his will to us. He expects obedience.

But love for God is necessary to implicit obedience. When we love him with all the heart, then obedience will become a delight, and he will take our poor stumbling efforts and turn them into real spiritual victories. There is an old legend which relates that in ancient Greece a prize was offered for the best statue of a certain god. In a little country village lived a devout young man who aspired to be a great sculptor. He secured a block of marble and began work on it. His ideal was

high, but his clumsy fingers failed to bring out his conception of the god. The day arrived when the statues were to be judged. The young man brought his, but it was only a laughingstock. The would-be sculptor was deeply humiliated at his failure. But the god had pity on him. In an instant the statue seemed to be proudly raised and all the harsh lines fell into perfect symmetry and grace. Then criticism gave way to praise and honor. So when we love Him, in the midst of our failures he will work in us "to will and to do, for his good pleasure," and, through obedience to his Word, our character shall take on his likeness.

MEN'S EXCUSES

MEN'S EXCUSES

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse."

OF those who are not Christians there are two classes. The first is made up of the desperately wicked. They have thrown a loose rein to passion and appetite, and have let sin have its own way in them. And when sin has its own way it does not take long to do its deadly work. In a very short time sin will blacken and blast and destroy the most promising life. The wages of sin is *always* death. Someone has published a book in which are fifty pictures each bearing such a close resemblance to the one immediately preceding that the keenest eye can scarcely detect any difference. Yet the first picture is a beautiful aphrodite, and the fiftieth is a grinning monkey. A transformation is going on in human character every day, and, though it may be scarcely discernible, yet sin is surely doing its

MEN'S EXCUSES

work. When there is no restraint the picture will be finished speedily. "And the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death."

ALMOST CHRISTIANS

The second class is made up of men who have had the restraints of a Christian home, and of the church and Sunday school. They have had praying fathers and mothers, and have been surrounded with Christian influences from birth. They have not gone into the grosser vices, but have lived morally. One of these came to Jesus once and said he had kept all the commandments from his youth. But Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest." These men believe the Christian life to be the right life to live, yet they do not live it. They are almost in the kingdom, but not in. And they are in just as much danger of "the wrath to come" as those of the first class. Indeed, it may be that their eternal re-

MEN'S EXCUSES

morse will be greater. They were *almost* saved yet *altogether* lost. Now, these are they who are constantly excusing themselves.

NO FEELING

Some excuse themselves for not being Christians by saying that they "do not feel like it." They wait for some physical manifestation of need. There is no greater deception, for the physical feelings are no indication of our spiritual need. Often, the less feeling, the greater danger, and so, the greater need. A man may be in extreme peril and yet have no physical sense of need. Indeed, the physical feelings may sometimes indicate or suggest the very opposite of what we ought to do. Egerton Ryerson Young, the great missionary of the Northwest, was once overtaken by a terrible blizzard. He struggled on through the snow hoping to reach a shelter. But soon he was conscious of a physical condition he

MEN'S EXCUSES

had not known before. Every snow-bank seemed like a restful couch upon which he wanted to lie down and sleep, and the air about him seemed to be surcharged with strains of sweetest music. It was only by supreme effort of will that he roused himself to press on through the storm, and at last came to a place of safety. So sin dulls the moral sensibility and makes us unconscious of danger. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." And when our feet are once set in this way of death, not by following any physical inclination but only by a supreme effort of the will shall we escape to the house of mercy.

PRECONCEPTIONS

Others excuse themselves because of some preconceived notion concerning the method of getting into the kingdom. They say, "I expect to be a Christian; but when I am converted it

MEN'S EXCUSES

will be like this, or like that." The old Syrian general furnishes a good illustration of this class. He was a great man but a leper. He went down to Israel to find the prophet of God. But before he reached the prophet's house he had the plans all arranged as to what would be done and how it would be done. He supposed the man of God would lay his hand upon him and say, "Be thou clean," and it would be done. But Elisha had a different program. He sent out his servant to tell the great man that if he would wash in Jordan seven times he would be healed. Whereupon Naaman became angry and started for his home saying, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" And he

MEN'S EXCUSES

doubtless would have died a leper had not his friends persuaded him to do as Elisha had bidden him do. He dipped in Jordan seven times and was healed. And when will men learn that when they come to God asking for mercy and healing of soul they must put aside their own prejudices and notions, and be willing to receive as it pleaseth him to give?

PRIDE OF HEART

And others who are very near the kingdom of grace are kept out by pride of heart. They say, "I expect to be a Christian, but I will not stand up to ask for prayer; I will not go into an inquiry meeting; I will not make public confession." People do not wish to be known as seekers after God. There is no surer indication of pride of heart. Only the humble and contrite of heart will find mercy. Mr. Moody used to tell about a man who in a certain meeting expressed a desire to be a Christian but refused to go into the

MEN'S EXCUSES

inquiry meeting, saying, "If God wants to save me he can save me here." That night on his way home he was thrown from a carriage and fatally injured. Next day when Mr. Moody called to see him he said, "Take me to the inquiry room, Mr. Moody." Mr. Moody tried to persuade him that God could save him in his own room, but he said, "No. I had a controversy with God last night, and I said, 'I will not go.' Now I must go to that inquiry room if I am saved." When face to face with death his proud heart had yielded.

HAVE TRIED BEFORE

Of all the excuses inspired by the evil one this is the most foolish. A man says, "I know it is right to be a Christian, but I tried once and failed, and I am afraid to try again." Yet there may be found in every community men who at some time or other have made a start in the Christian life and failed to go forward, and who now

MEN'S EXCUSES

make this excuse for living without God. The Bible says, "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." But this does not mean that a man *must* fall seven times. It does mean that when the just man—the manly man—falls he does not stay down; he gets up and tries again. Is not that the manly way in every department of life? Besides, what man need fall who trusts in God? Is he not able to deliver? He he not said, "My grace is sufficient for thee"? Is not victory assured to every man who will watch and pray? "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." God sends his angels to camp about every man who has yielded his life to him.

Which of the monarchs of the earth
Can boast a guard like ours?
Encircled from our second birth
With all the heavenly powers.

If we have fallen it is because we have trusted the arm of flesh rather than

MEN'S EXCUSES

the Omnipotent arm: we have forgotten that the one imperial legion is mightier than all the hosts of hell. Or it is because we have compromised with sin and the world instead of being out and out for God. The devil likes no better mark than a half-hearted, indifferent professing Christian.

UNDERVALUE THE SPIRITUAL

There are those who put all the emphasis upon this earthly life. The material and transient are ever before them, while the spiritual and eternal are neglected. They say, "I expect to become a Christian some day, but not until I get settled in life," or "not until I get a bank," or "not until I get an education." They assure us that this important matter will be attended to, but not until they have gotten a competency for this life. And they seem never to think that while they are seeking the bank or the store or the education the summons may come to

MEN'S EXCUSES

leave this world. Neither do they seem to know that while they seek the things of earth the devil is busy setting traps for their feet and forging chains for their bondage. There are multitudes of men to-day who in earlier life could not have been persuaded that they would not become Christians when they had reached life's maturity, but who now seldom stand inside a church and have little or no regard for the most sacred things of the Christian religion. Through constant excusings they have drifted into hardness of heart and indifference of life.

Mark Guy Pearse tells of a party of huntsmen who sat on a mountainside in the Highlands of Scotland eating their noonday lunch, when one of their number called the attention of his companions to a sheep that stood on the sheer edge of a precipice on the mountain just across the valley. They all turned their glasses on the sheep, saying, "How did it get down there?"

MEN'S EXCUSES

Then one of the men, who was acquainted with the habits of sheep in the mountains, explained that the sheep was once back on the tableland, but coming over the mountain had seen a little green grass on a ledge of rock and had jumped down to get it; then, not finding it easy to get back, had been tempted by another tuft of grass to jump down on the next ledge. It had kept going down until now it stood on the very edge of the perpendicular rock. "Now what will it do?" said the men. "Now the eagles will swoop down on it," said the hunter, "and, driven to desperation by hunger and fright, it will leap over the precipice and be dashed to pieces on the rocks below." That is a picture of many a man who seeks the things of the world and leaves God out. He keeps stepping down from the tableland of manhood, and comes at last to the precipice, and life ends in tragedy and darkness.

BETRAYING CHRIST

BETRAYING CHRIST

“Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed.”

JUDAS ISCARIOT repented of his crime and then went out and hanged himself. But every Judas does not hang himself. There are those who betray their Lord now and with brazen face still profess to be his followers. Indeed, it may be possible to outdo Iscariot in crime and be more guilty than he; for Jesus said, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

LOVE OF MONEY

Some betray Christ now for love of money. They sell Christ to the highest bidder. Once a woman came with a

BETRAYING CHRIST

pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. But Judas said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor? Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein." And are there not men to-day who always devise economy and great caution in the temporal affairs of the church, not because they love the church, but because the plans for a new church building, or for an increase in the pastor's salary, may mean an increase in the sum they would be expected to subscribe? Like Ananias, who also belonged to the tribe of Judas, they are keeping back part of the Lord's money; and to conceal their theft they plead for economy. They betray Christ in that for love of money they hinder his work and shame his church.

And he who betrays Christ soon be-

BETRAYING CHRIST

trays himself. All his higher manhood feels the paralyzing touch of covetousness. In New Zealand a curious specimen has been found. A seed is swallowed and becomes lodged in the folds of a caterpillar's neck. When the insect burrows in the ground the seed begins to grow, absorbs the entire animal substance, and actually fills out the caterpillar's skin with solid woody fiber, while the plant grows from the folds in the neck. This is a picture of many a man who has professed to be a follower of Christ. The desire for riches has so absorbed his time and thought that there is nothing left but the skin of an empty profession. He has sold his Lord.

FALSE FRIENDSHIP

Others betray Christ by false friendship. They claim to be his friends. They pay compliments to Christ and patronize him. As Joseph Parker says, "They damn him with faint praise."

BETRAYING CHRIST

They say he was *a good man*. But they dishonor him by denying his Sonship, and the efficacy of his atonement. They make light of the great fact that Christ shed his blood for the sins of the world. These are they spoken of by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews when he says, "Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" They affect friendship for Christ, yet they dethrone him: for "a Christ without a cross is a king without a throne." But there can be no real love and devotion to Christ without an interest in his atoning blood. Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to give his life a ransom for many"; and whosoever shall make light of the cross and the shed blood of the Son of God, yet claim to be his friend, is a betrayer.

BETRAYING CHRIST

When Jesus stood before Pilate, and the bloodthirsty mob cried, "Let him be crucified," Pilate at first tried to protect Christ; but when he "saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. . . . Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified." He pretended friendship and declared that Jesus was innocent, yet scourged him and delivered him to the murderers. But was Pilate worse than some who, to-day, profess friendship for the Son of God, yet, when persecution comes, or their own selfish interests are likely to suffer, they have no courage to defend the One whom they profess to love?

COMPROMISE

Some betray him by compromise. They want to serve Christ and, at the

BETRAYING CHRIST

same time, the world. They seem to forget that Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." They would like to be known as his followers, yet they still live the worldly life. They speak good words for Christ, and then betray him by their deeds. They would be called Christians, yet they live and do as the people of the world do. There is no form of betrayal more cruel than this. Indeed, there is no blasphemy more terrible than misrepresentation of God by professed disciples, professing to have a love for his kingdom and yet in their lives showing anything but loyalty and devotion. What shall be said of a man who comes into your home, claims to be your friend and helper, is given the hospitality, confidence, and affection of your home, yet when he goes out among other people betrays that confidence and affection by deeds and words that bring dishonor and disgrace upon the home where he had been so

BETRAYING CHRIST

kindly received? And what shall be said of a man who comes into the church of Christ and claims to be a Christian, yet in his daily life frequents those places, and engages in those forms of amusement that are directly contrary to the spirit and teaching of the church in which he has found a home, and at whose altars he has taken the most solemn vows? Surely he is a betrayer.

When a man compromises with sin he becomes a stumbling-block in the way of others. And Jesus said, "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." A man who was superintendent of a Sunday school in a little country church went to a neighboring city on business. He found it necessary to remain in the city overnight. As he sat in his hotel he said to him-

BETRAYING CHRIST

self, "Now, nobody knows me here and I might as well go down to a theater and spend the evening." He made his way down the street to a cheap theater and went in. But it so happened that a young man who was a member of his Sunday school in the country, and who had come to the city a few days before, seeking employment, was standing on the street watching the crowds pour into the theater. He had not thought of going in himself, having been taught that a true Christian should never be found in such places. But when he saw the man who was his Sunday school superintendent come down the street and pass in, he said, "Well, there can surely be no harm for me." He stepped up to the window, bought a ticket, and passed in. That night at the theater was the beginning of a downward career. He fell into the wrong kind of company. He began to neglect the services of the church. Then soon he was drinking and in-

BETRAYING CHRIST

dulging in the baser passions. Some years afterward he was brought back to the old home in the country in a dying condition as a result of dissipation. When the family saw that he could not live someone suggested sending for a minister. But it was six miles to the town and he might not live until the minister came. Then they sent across the fields for the Sunday school superintendent. He came. But as he entered the room the young man seemed to surmise why he had come, and throwing up his hand he said, "Go away, go away! Do not talk to me about my soul. I am lost. I was a Christian but you threw me off the track. Go away!" And he would not hear a word from him. Is it not an awful thing to turn a soul aside from the path of right? Yet he who compromises with sin is sure to do this. Thus he betrays his Lord.

BETRAYING CHRIST

SILENCE

Some betray him by silence. To a young man, who was starting for the lumber woods of Michigan, a friend said, "Now, John, you will find many godless men about you who will make all manner of sport of you for being a Christian, but you must endure persecution and be true to Christ." When John returned his friend said, "Well, how did you get along? What did those fellows say when they found out you were a Christian?" "Found out?" said John; "why, they didn't find out. I lived so that they never suspected me of being a Christian." But is there not many a man who so betrays his Lord? Jesus said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Perhaps this is the most shameful and

BETRAYING CHRIST

dangerous betrayal of all—the betrayal of silence. The brazenness of infidelity is nothing to this. To know that Christ is God and King of kings; to know that he is worthy the homage of our hearts and voices, and yet refuse it, that is the climax of wickedness.

A mother found it necessary to leave her baby boy in the cradle at home while she went to a neighbor's house on an errand. Returning she saw flames bursting from the windows of her home. She rushed up to the house and was about to enter when the people who had gathered pulled her back, saying that it would be certain death to go in. But she broke away from them, made her way through flame and smoke to the cradle, wrapped some blankets about the baby, and carried him out. The child was unhurt, but the mother was dreadfully burned. For many weeks she was near death. When she did recover she was all scarred and crippled. Sixteen years afterward,

BETRAYING CHRIST

walking along the street with some gay companions, that boy met his mother; but he passed without a look of recognition, being ashamed to let his companions know that this crippled old woman was his mother. So thousands treat Jesus Christ. He gave his life for us. All the blessings of a Christian civilization we owe to him. Yet some are ashamed to speak his name or confess him as their Saviour. They hide their profession under indifferent and cruel silence.

Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days?

Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away;
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

Aug 29 1908

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 063 448 0

